

## VI. SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

This chapter reviews a variety of services that are generally provided to employers in the Resource Room context, identifying those that employers may access on their own, or with the minimal assistance from Center staff. We also discuss the contextual factors that continue to influence how services are currently delivered, as well as sites' future plans.

To provide an in-depth look at self-service delivery mechanisms used by One-Stop systems, information on self-directed services for the employer community was gathered during the site visits using several methods. First, Center staff described their range of employer services and the rationale for their selections. Second, One-Stop leadership discussed *how* and by *whom* employer services were delivered. Finally, SPR site visitors interviewed employers, who commented on existing services and the kinds of services they were most in need of, given the current employment environment.

Typically, at the time of the site visits, One-Stop Centers were concentrating on developing their range of self-services and resources for universal customers—some had been in business as One-Stops for only a year or so—with the intention of slowly expanding and marketing employer self-service options in the coming months. While most One-Stop sites exhibited a wide range of services for employers, many were staff-facilitated, since many employers seem reluctant to use on-site services. For example, the One-Stop director at the *Morrisville Career Resource Center* indicated that, in their small town atmosphere, where people knew each other, self-directed services for employers did not have much appeal. On the other hand, at the *Boston Work Place* and the *Anoka County Workforce Center* in Minnesota, One-Stop leadership is aggressively pursuing self-services for employers. Other sites indicated that, to varying degrees, they were implementing some self-directed services for employers, but also investigating other strategies that might eventually (down the road) allow employers to access more information and services on their own. For example, One-Stop Center staff sometimes took laptops to

*Employers seem reluctant to embrace self-services and seek personalized attention.*

employers' work places and taught them how to access and sign up for America's Job Bank.

Sites that wanted to allow employers some latitude in how they accessed services developed "service tiers," dividing services into self-directed and *assisted* or *facilitated* self-service categories. Other innovations consisted of partnering with local business-oriented organizations—such as Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Departments—to assist the One-Stop Centers to market their new services to employers. Some sites also employed individuals from these business-led organizations to deliver and develop services beyond the traditional labor exchange services typically offered by the Employment Service.

*Partnering with local business organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, can help One-Stop Centers design and market self-services to employers.*

Environmental factors also impacted how decision-makers were shaping their employer services in the One-Stop setting. External factors influenced decisions as to which services would be provided and which could be presented in a self- or minimally-assisted environment. For example, the low unemployment rate (ranging from 2%- 4% in the communities we visited) was an important factor in how—and which—services were provided to employers. Another factor was the ability of the One-Stop system to effectively utilize technology to enhance self-accessed services, coupled with the level of sophistication and willingness of local employers to utilize these technologies. Finally, as has been noted in other One-Stop implementation research, traditions and images "die hard." Most employers still expect that the public labor exchange system will continue to provide them with one-on-one services and are somewhat reluctant to investigate other, less staff-intensive services.

#### **SELF-DIRECTED AND ASSISTED SELF-SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS**

Technology has made information and services more accessible to all customers—for job seekers as well as employers. All states represented in this study have developed web pages, available on the Internet. Local One-Stop Centers are also connected to their states' job matching systems and to the Internet. In addition, a number of SDAs, counties, and local communities have also established web pages. These electronic linkages have greatly expanded the ability of employers that have Internet access to electronically post job orders, access databases of job seekers, and obtain labor market and other

*Electronic linkages have greatly enhanced the ability of employers to post job orders and access information about job seekers.*

business-related information. However, beyond these technology-dependent services, local sites differ in their approach to the business community, the information and the services they provide, and how they deliver these services. Aware that employers still prefer to be “served” by a staff person, study sites made an attempt to provide an array of services that would give employers the staff support they needed, while giving them the latitude to access services and information on their own when this made sense. Moreover, many Centers were developing strategies for transitioning employers from assisted to self-services. For example, an employer may need some initial assistance from staff, but at a later date, may be capable of completing or engaging in the activity on their own.

### **Recruitment and Screening Strategies**

*Posting electronic job orders.* It is now common practice for employers to be able to reach a large number of potential applicants with the placement of one job order—a significant improvement over the prior system. All sites allow employers to post a job order by telephone or fax. These job orders are then placed on the state’s job matching system, thereby making the employer’s vacancies and employment requirements known to job seekers across the state. States also place employer job orders on America’s Job Bank (AJB), thus making it possible for an employer’s initial submittal to be broadcast nationwide.

*Employers have the option of recruiting for job applicants either electronically or by on-site recruitment.*

Most states represented in the study also provided electronic on-line access, so employers can post job orders and access job seeker applicants. Similarly, some counties and communities represented in the study have established local web sites allowing local employers to post their job orders to the local One-Stop Center, and access databases of local job seekers.

To facilitate self-services, most sites are already allowing job seekers to contact some employers directly, or vice versa. In most sites, therefore, the employers can stipulate whether the job seeker is able to contact them directly or must first be approved for referral by a One-Stop staff person. Similarly, some states are moving aggressively in the direction of giving employers greater freedom to contact job seekers on their own. For example, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security is moving in this direction, with a goal of having 80% of large and medium-sized employers processing resumes by

*Centers are promoting the idea of allowing job seekers to contact employers directly in response to a job posting, or vice versa.*

computer. The state of Indiana also recently implemented the CS 3 system; when in place, it will allow employers to match their job orders electronically with applicants who have registered with the One-Stop Center and placed their resumes on their system.

*On-site recruitment strategies.* In addition to these electronic methods, sites use other strategies to help employers “help themselves” to actively recruit job applicants. These included on-site recruitment strategies, such as:

- *Self-posting and maintenance of job openings.* At the *Austin (South) Workforce Center*, employers who have on-going employment vacancies often maintain their own job postings on a “Hot Jobs” bulletin board. At the *Bloomington WDC*, employers who have immediate or large scale employment requirements leave flyers at the Center, placed near the Intake computers where individuals filing UI claims and registering for the Job Service will see them; usually they can then contact these employers directly.
- *Using Center facilities for recruitment.* All One-Stop Centers in the study allowed employers to recruit on-site. In most cases, employers can “self-schedule.” The Center then publicizes these events on a weekly or monthly calendar available to job seekers in the resource area. Variations on this popular strategy are described below.
  - The *Anoka County WDC* provides tables and chairs for employers who may “set up shop” in their lobby, to pass out information about their company and take applications. The Center publicizes employer recruitment schedules to Resource Room users and other job seekers.
  - At the *Austin WC*, employers may use recruitment space on another floor of the Center. Samsung Semiconductor used the Center as a recruitment site for all its entry level manufacturing positions when it opened an Austin plant in 1997. “Temp” agencies also use the Center facilities to conduct “informational” sessions to recruit for applicants on a regular basis.
  - At the *Bloomington WDC*, employers make presentations to interested job applicants that includes information about their company,

*Centers allow employers to recruit on-site, by posting listings, interviewing candidates, or conducting informational sessions.*

wages, and positions available, then take applications. Employers may also use Center space to conduct orientation sessions for new hires.

- *Offering other space for employers conducting large-scale recruitment activities.* Most One-Stop Centers have only limited space for large-scale recruitment activities; consequently, some One-Stop Centers broker or provide other space for this activity.
  - The Brevard County Training Consortium offers larger recruitment space at the Brevard Community County facilities, in place of the *Melbourne Job Link Center*, where space is limited.
- *Employer panels and workshops.* Some One-Stop Centers also invite employers to participate in various workshop-type sessions that provide them with an opportunity to “market” their companies even when they were not taking job applications. Employer respondents indicated that this also gave them an opportunity to become acquainted with the caliber of job seeker applicants available through the Center. These employer-based presentations, with attractive titles, are effective marketing tools to job seekers and employers alike.
  - At the *Austin WC* employers are encouraged to make presentations at the Center’s Employer Panels sessions.
  - The *Anoka WDC* sponsors Employer of the Month sessions, which feature one employer who makes a presentation, then answers questions about the company. Their Employer of the Week series allows an employer to recruit in the lobby.
  - The *Bloomington WDC* plans on holding workshops that feature a single employer, who can discuss the firm’s hiring requirements and conduct on-site interviews.

One-Stop Centers are also interested in marketing professional and technical job seekers who use their Resource Rooms. For example, one site manager indicated that attracting higher skilled job seekers and marketing these individuals to employers was an effective way to attract employers who might not otherwise utilize the Center. Similarly, two study sites make it possible for employers to “talent

browse” and access salaried applicants on their own, or with minimal assistance from staff.

Centers also provide other innovative on-site recruitment services.

- *The Career Maker system.* The *Boston Work Place* developed a talent bank called the Career Maker, which includes the electronic matching of job applicants’ capabilities with employers’ needs.
- *The Minnesota SkillsNet system.* At the *Anoka WDC*, job seekers may have their resumes scanned and placed into the state’s resume database. The system uses artificial intelligence to sort and classify resumes based on skill groupings and matched to job openings. A “matched” resume may then be sent directly to an employer or sent by the applicant. Employers may also contact individuals directly to schedule an interview.
- The *Renton Washington CDC* encourages employers who do not have Internet access to use the Center computers, where they may view on-line resumes.
- At the *Melbourne Job Link Center*, tele-video conferencing equipment is available that allows employers in another location with the same equipment to interview Center job seekers.

*Innovative strategies for serving employers include electronic job matching and tele-video interviewing.*

*Off-site recruitment activities.* One-Stop Centers also arranged off-site recruitment activities. For example, often Centers were involved in setting up Job Fairs at malls, either alone or as a sponsor in concert with other organizations. In these activities, employers are often able to self-register (in some communities, for a fee) and set up their own booths without further assistance from the sponsors. Some specific examples include:

- *Special events to bring the employer and job seeker together without direct Center intervention.* Among all the One-Stop study sites, Job Fairs afforded an effective means to bring the job seeker and employer together, without intensive use of staff. Innovative examples of Job Fairs included:
  - *Televised Job Fairs.* The *Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES)* sponsored a series of televised job fairs, partnering with KARE 11, a local television station. Employers could register by mailing

or faxing in an application form that was attached to the MDES employer newsletter, *The Connection*.

- *Local Job Fairs.* The *Anoka WDC* sponsors Job Fairs held at the local mall. During the last Job Fair, 140 employers and more than 20,000 job seekers attended.
- *Targeted Job Fairs.* To attract a range of job seekers in communities with low unemployment rates, One-Stop sites collaborated with local organizations and other agencies to conduct Job Fairs for targeted job seekers. For example, the *Austin WC* collaborated with “Temp” agencies on a local Job Fair. Similarly, *Bloomington WDC* collaborated with Green Thumb to set up a Job Fair for older workers, and another with the School-to-Work program to attract employers interested in youth for the Summer Jobs program or recent high school graduates for permanent positions.
- *Outplacement assistance for downsizing firms.* The *Austin WC*, the *Melbourne Job Link Center*, the *Renton CDC* and the *Bloomington WDC* have assisted employers to set up small resource Centers for large-scale layoffs at the plant site. The affected employers provided space and equipment. Media publicity for the Bloomington effort attracted other employers to use Center services.

*Job Fairs, both for the general job seeker and targeted populations, such as youth in school-to-work programs, were also popular strategies that minimize staff assistance.*

### **Information Developed Specifically for Business**

All states represented in the study provide information beyond local job listings that is potentially useful to employers and that they may access on their own, in a range of formats. For example, state web sites have become an important resource to provide information to employers, and most State web sites have sections developed specifically for employers. As discussed in the previous chapter, labor market information was typically available in this way, sometimes reformatted specifically for each local SDA.

Additionally, employers with Internet capabilities can access a range of other information typically available on state web sites, including UI, Worker’s Compensation, and similar regulations important to businesses. All sites also provide information about the One-Stop system and their locations across the state. Employers can

also access electronic databases such as America's Talent Bank and America's Job Bank, and linkages to their local One-Stop system web site or home page if one has been established. Some notable examples of innovations in resources that can be accessed electronically are described below:

- In Minnesota, the *MDES* web site lists recruitment resources, including Business Expos, which feature business-related events in the state; a Human Resources Management Support section, which includes the Hiring Advisor that provides information on appropriate hiring practices; and employer committees and support groups, such as the Business Ombudsman.
- The *Texas Workforce Commission* (TWC) web site provides a range of business-based information on LMI, state services specific to employers, and databases of job seekers through Job Express. The LMI division and the SOICC provide information on industry and occupational trends, UI rates, and wages and benefits rates. Additional information can be requested through the LMI division's e-mail address. The TWC also provides information at their state and local web sites that describe their Centers in great detail
- The *Indiana Department of Workforce Development* (DWD) has moved all its labor market information to its home page. DWD has also developed a section called "About the Search" to make linkages to other sites easier. Sections of particular interest to employers include an "Employer Desk Guide" that lists information and services available to employers, a calendar of events, UI rates, detailed information on UI regulations, and laws governing notification of a plant closure. Bloomington's SDA also has a home page that provides detailed information about One-Stop locations and services.
- The *Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development* (DWD) web site lists information for employers that includes: the Business Resource Network designed to help businesses find useful information on the web; a list of Wisconsin Job (One-Stop) Centers; and Wages & Hour information and laws.

*State and Center web pages provide a range of information useful to employers, including regulations relating to employment practices, advice on hiring, and labor market information.*



### **Example of Innovative Software Providing Useful Guidance**

The *Workforce Center of Anoka County* makes available to employers the Hiring Advisor, a software program that includes information on ADA and EEO compliance, and strategies for conducting job analysis, recruiting, building an applicant pool, and conducting background checks. This package can be printed or downloaded from their Internet web site.

Study states and sites also attempted to keep employers informed about the emerging One-Stop system through publications and brochures, as well as providing information through kiosks. Some examples include:

- “The Connection” is a quarterly news bulletin published by the *Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES)*, sent out to employers. It includes information on how employers can access on-line services and place job orders on the Internet. *Anoka WDC* brochures describe how information can be self-accessed, special incentives for employers, and sample applications that can be faxed or mailed to the Center to request information or submit a job order. The Resource Center also offers employers a “model application” that includes a section on reasons for asking for specific kinds of information.
- *TWC’s* LMI division mails out a monthly publication called the “Labor Market Review”, also available at One-Stop Centers.
- The *Morrisville, Vermont* One-Stop Center provides brochures on self-services for employers. The site also has a kiosk in the local mall whose Services for Employers section describes information available at the local One-Stop Center, such as AJB, Training Brokerage, human resource consulting, and recruitment assistance.
- At the *Racine WDC*, a regional LMI analyst is available to serve employers, such as adapting information specific to employer needs. Employers may also print out an employer services menu at the Center’s lobby kiosks.

*Some Centers produce brochures specifically geared towards employers. One developed a Resource Room with employer customers specifically in mind.*

### **HOW EMPLOYER SERVICES ARE DELIVERED**

Several One-Stop Centers in our study have attempted to move away from the traditional labor exchange model of using ES specialists

to contact employers to request job orders. Instead, these Centers are marketing themselves as a place where employers can access a range of services, some provided in a self-service mode, while other services are still available through “account executives.” For example, skills matching assistance is still a service employers say they want in this period of low unemployment. However, our study sites wanted to help employers become conscious of the fact that One-Stop Centers are very different from the previous system and that this change is to their advantage.

#### **An Innovative Strategy for Delivering Employer Services**

The *Bloomington WDC* is particularly interested in developing stronger relationships with the employer community and has attempted to devise a number of strategies to support this initiative. For example, an Employer Information Resource Area (EIRA) has been developed specifically for employers. Located adjacent to the Resource Room for job seekers, the EIRA includes materials developed by the local WDC as well as by the state Department of Workforce Development. LMI and other information tailored specifically for employers is available there, such as videotapes and various publications, including “1001 Ways to Reward Employees,” “Stopping Sexual Harassment,” and two ADA videos, among others. Employers can request copies of these resources with a “fax back” order form. The WDC is also featuring local employers on videotape in a “Profiles” series, which provides information on job titles and duties, working conditions, and other information about the specific employer. This information is useful in helping employers market themselves to potential job seekers.

New models of service delivery also included partnering with business-led entities. Several sites are partnering or collaborating with local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Departments, in order to expand their outreach, but also to broaden the range of services to the business community. Along with this, One-Stop Centers are working hard to change their image. Some Center managers commented that employers are more likely to use all services—self and facilitated—if they are comfortable with staff attitudes and responses. For example:

- In *Bloomington*, the Chamber of Commerce sponsors a Workforce Development Initiatives group, designed to promote employer services available through the

*New models of service delivery include partnering with business-led groups, to help design and promote employer services.*

Center.

- In *Racine*, the Center's Employer Services team consists of employees of business organizations who work under contract to the Center.

#### **Example of Involving Employer Groups in Marketing**

At the *Racine WDC*, employer services are provided by an Employer Services Team staffed by personnel from business-led organizations who work under contract to the Center. They call on employers in the community to inform them about Center services. Their primary effort is not to solicit job orders, but the Center management indicates that job orders have increased since the Employer Services Team was established.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Each of the One-Stop sites in the study indicated that employers in their community were not particularly interested in self-directed services. Rather, employers expressed a need for more intensive services, particularly having an "account executive" located at the One-Stop Center whom they could contact with a job order, and who would take a personal interest in their workforce needs. This was especially important, employers said, in this "job seekers' market." One respondent indicated that she maintained close contact with "one particular staff person," because she "wanted to keep her needs in front of staff, keep the door open." Another employer compared it to going to the same barber each week, because "he knows what you want and you don't need to keep reminding him."

*Many employers lack the easy ability to access the Internet and thus cannot access information electronically.*

As described in other sections, job orders in each of the One-Stop sites are already being disseminated across the state, and in most states, across the country, potentially giving employers access to a huge databank of job seekers from which to select. However, while job seekers seem to be comfortable using the self-service systems in Resource Rooms to conduct their job search, only about half of the employer respondents indicated that they had Internet capabilities and only a few of those said that they used their computers to search for job applicants.

However, in those sites where employers had an opportunity to learn more about the One-Stop system by way of participating in

Center-related activities—a Job Fair, recruiting for applicants at the Center, or making a presentation at a job seeker workshop—they indicated that they had a better perception of the One-Stop concept and how it was preferable to services provided under the previous system. They were also enthusiastic about being able to use the services that the Center offered, without intensive assistance from staff. On the other hand, employers who had only marginal interaction with their local Center were confused about the services of the One-Stop Center; e.g., how it was different from the “Employment Service,” and the role of the on-site partners. Clearly, employers need more information about all the services available in their local One-Stop Centers in order to make better use of them. Moreover, a case needs to be made as to how their use of self-directed services can enhance their workforce needs. Employers’ examples of how they could be kept informed included receiving a quarterly newsletter or brochure describing services at the Center or available on the Internet. They also expressed an interest in services they could direct at terminated employees, such as brochures that they could give to employees about to be laid off.

*Many employers don’t see how self-services can benefit them. They need more information about potential advantages.*

As One-Stop Centers are being asked to do more with less staff, and self-services for job seekers are expanding, One-Stop Centers are looking for ways to satisfy their employer requirements for employment-related services in a cost and staff-effective manner. One strategy some Centers are adopting to accomplish this is to move to fee-based services for activities that are more staff-intensive. Staff-intensive fee-based services were offered at the *Boston Work Place*, *Racine WDC*, and the *Austin Workforce Center-South*. Some of these services consisted of customized employee assessments, job profiling and task analysis, large scale Job Fairs, outplacement services and consulting, pre-screening and recruitment assistance, and professional development and human resources services.

*A balance must be struck between providing employers the personalized attention they need, while encouraging them to access information and resources on their own.*

In any case, clearly employers, as with job seekers—at least in some states—will be asked to do more on their own, particularly in the arena of making their own job matches. If One-Stop sites can continue to innovate in other employer services-related areas, perhaps an acceptable balance can be found—one in which employers receive the help they need in the critical areas, but in which they can also move forward to use the self-directed services available to them.